

Boot to Boot

COMPANY D
1ST BATTALION
12TH CAVALRY



VIETNAM, 1965-1972

FOR HE TODAY THAT SHEDS HIS BLOOD WITH ME SHALL BE MY BROTHER FROM THIS DAY TO THE ENDING OF THE WORLD

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 4

OCTOBER 2021

Delta Vietnam Veterans gather in Las Vegas

After a 2020 COVID hiatus, friendships are renewed in 2021

After the “lost year” of 2020, eighty veterans spent three days renewing the friendships made in the foxholes of Vietnam at Delta Company’s fifth reunion.



Following a Welcome Reception on Monday, the veterans and their guests were at leisure to enjoy Las Vegas. Some attended shows (The Righteous Brothers were in South Point’s Showroom), there was a golf outing, we had a few gamblers, and some who lounged by the pool with cigars and Fireball.

Wednesday morning Reverend Bob Duke (a 1971 Delta Platoon Leader) officiated at our memorial service, which, as always, featured the reading, by those who served with them, of the Roll of Honor of the eighty-six brothers who did not return.

After a break for group photographs, we held our General Membership Meeting, during which we elected officers



Gary DeRigne, a award-winning author of two novels based on



his Vietnam experiences as a combat-wounded Delta NCO, was our keynote speaker. Using slides to illustrate, Gary summarized his service with Delta in 1969, briefly recounted a bittersweet life during the years after returning home, described his writing and publishing experiences, and wrapped up with his take on “The Meaning of It All.”

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October 2021 1

Delta returns!

...TO Las Vegas

IN 2022

(See Inside)

and members of the board. Walter Wilczak was elected Vice President, while Kirk Knight (65-66), and Ron Redalen (67-68) were elected to the board as “second” Era Representatives. The remainder of officers and board members were re-elected to a second term.

REUNION OVERVIEW (Continued from page 1) Gary spoke of his friendship with Medal of Honor recipient Rod Evans and Rod's heroic death in a North Vietnamese ambush. He described being re-acquainted with Colonel Jonathan Dodson, his platoon leader as a young Lieutenant in 1969, platoon Medic Greg Ciardi, fellow platoon sergeant [Banquet MC] John Coleman, fellow author Basil Clark, Medal of Honor recipient John Baca, platoon RTO Randy Rober, and close friend Jonathan Wild after the war. And he told of the deaths of Mitchell Hamabata and Jonathan Wild, years after returning home, the result of exposure in Vietnam to Agent Orange.

In summarizing "The Meaning of It All," Gary reminded us that American fighting men and women had not lost the Vietnam War, that America's government and people had simply given up on it. "America is the Land of the Free Because of the Brave," he said in closing, "and that includes the Delta veterans in this room."

DELTA'S REUNION PLAN

2022 - Las Vegas, the Sequel, October 2-5

Back by Popular Demand

2023 - Louisville, the One We Lost, June 13-17

"Piggyback" on the 1st Cavalry Division Association

2024 - Washington, The Wall - Dates TBA

Time to go "back east"

HOW (AND WHY) OUR PLAN CHANGED

At our General Membership Meeting, we voted a "Sense of the Membership," to "piggyback" the 1st Cavalry Division Association in Dayton, Ohio in 2022, then do the same in Louisville, Kentucky in 2023, followed in 2024 by a Delta Reunion in Washington, DC.

However, we later found that many of our members would prefer a return to Las Vegas in 2022, rather than joining the Division Association in Dayton. Of course some, especially if local, will want to do both.

In the interest of preserving our geographical diversity, at our meeting we did not consider that we might stay "in the west." Neither did we consider that a "repeat" alleviates many of the difficulties in planning our own event. We understand that Delta veterans near Dayton will be disappointed, but Louisville is only 150 miles from Dayton, so we'd be "geographically back-to-back" with that plan, too. Since we intend these "piggy-backs" to be without cost to our members, there are financial reasons not to do them in consecutive years. We have no dues, and though it's our plan to only break-even at our own reunions, they do provide an opportunity for Delta veterans to contribute, which is our financial "life-blood."

There was little interest in Dayton, and many were pleased to see Louisville it back on the schedule. In fact, it's now on the Division's schedule in consecutive years.

As a result of these and other factors, including the excellent performance of South Point Hotel in every respect, the Board was polled, and agreed to proceed on the basis of the above schedule.



Treasurer

Veterans of D Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry (Vietnam)



First Commander's Corner

Our 2021 Delta Veterans Reunion at South Point Las Vegas end-September was a huge success, attended by more than 145 Delta Brothers and their Guests! There were many highlights.

The Memorial service, remembering and honoring the 86 Delta Brothers that died during the Vietnam War was heart-wrenching. Before, during, and following Our Reunion, we had been sadly informed that we continued to lose Delta Brothers called Home to Fiddlers Green: Brothers, Oscar Rubio, and, Chaplain Billy Lord, were interred with full Military Honors at National Military Cemeteries! Rest in peace, Our dear 'rothers' rest in peace, until 'e'join you on the other side! Following the Reunion Association Business Meeting, your newly-elected Executive Board began planning for Our 2022 Reunion!

Save the date! We want to see you in Las Vegas 2 – 5 October 2022 for our next reunion! Pack your swimsuits and sunbonnets for lounging and dining around the massive swimming pool/veranda complex at South Point Hotel

and Casino! Other exciting leisure activities are being planned. See additional information, details, in this letter!

A very special Thank you to Brothers Doug Christ, Fred MacLennan and Tom Kjos, for their stellar efforts in putting together Our super-wonderful Reunion! Those Reunions simply would not be possible without their work! Thanks also to those brothers who volunteered at the Reunion to join us on the Executive Board, helping to continue to move Our Delta Association forward! Welcome aboard and many thanks!

As we look forward to the coming Holiday Season and beyond into 2022, am reminded that each of us, are truly blessed and grateful for the many joys of this life! The very best is yet to come!

From all of us on the Executive Board of Your Delta Veterans Vietnam War Association, thank You for permitting us to serve; thank you for your continued support. Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas, and exciting New Year 2022!

Blessings & Boot to Boot

Johnny Sergulis

FIDDLER'S GREEN

Sadly, we report nine who have joined our brothers in
That shady meadow green, the eternal resting place known as Fiddler's Green.

ESTEL ALIFF
WINFRED HARRIS
JOSE ISLAS

KIPPER IRWIN
CHAPLAIN BILLY LORD
MICHAEL MORRIS

WILLIAM REAL
OSCAR RUBIO
BILLY WISDOM



Thuy Chung, George Davey, Leeanna Kirby, John Kirby, Ron Redalen, Ken Goff



Doug Christ, Bob March, Fred MacLennan, Paul Marling, Tom Kjos, John Gergulis



Tom Kjos, Richard Parker, George Davey



National Colors, 1st Cavalry Division Flag, Delta Guidon carried by the Silverado High School Army Junior ROTC



New York Strip Steak w/ Peppercorn Sauce, Lyonnaise Potatoes, Asparagus w/ shaved Carrots. (Chicken & Vegetarian meals were also very good.)

The best banquet meal of *any* reunion, hands down! (The steak was 12 oz. +)



David Corcoran, Bob March, Kirk Knight, Dennis Fetko, Chuck Rose, Alex Barber, Luther, Nixon, Walter Wilczak, John Gergulis, Randall Bays, Bob Ruiz



John Gergulis, Luther Nixon



Katherine and Bob March



Gary DeRigne (Keynote Speaker), Kitty DeRigne, Special Guest Jamie Wild (widow of Jonathan Wild, 69-70), Jon Dodson, Alicejean Dodson, Doris Coleman, John Coleman (Master of Ceremonies)



L-R: Ron Morgan, Gerry Fadden, AJ Rancatore, DeRay Brush, Lonnie Alexander, Fred MacLennan, Dave Guenther, Dale DeForge, ***(seated)*** Mike McKinney



L-R: Wayne Danke, Johnny Gergulis, Randall Bays, Frank Crary, Sandy Crary, Luther Nixon, Chuck Rose, Elsie Green



AJ Rancatore & Ron Morgan



L-R: Larry Toczak, John Flukes, Doug Kuhlman, Paul Perreira, Fred Lange, Dave Hendrickson, Arthur Colbert (***seated***) Jon Dodson, Fred Bell, Dave Black.
Attended but not pictured: Carl Wolfe, Rosie Rosales



L-R: Junior Collins, John McCarthy, Paul Marling, Rich Lee, Bob Duke, Cliff Sorrells, Tom Dombrowski, Mark Vinglish



Perreira Family: Paul, Pat, Jimmy, Josh, & Tracy



John Coleman
Banquet Master of Ceremonies



Andy Rios, Steve Kuckelman, Ramon Ramos, Jon Dodson, Randy Rober, Stacey Swinney, Larry Westbrook, Ray Ferber (front)



Hawaiian Formal - Fred Lange



Chuck Rose, Walter Wilczak, John Gergulis,
Dave Hendrickson, Fred Lange, George Davey



Kirk Knight & Janice Collins



The Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame inducted Delta friend Staff Sergeant Doug Warden, (USA Ret.) a Vietnam War veteran who served with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry into their ranks at the Vietnamese-American Memorial Monument in Oklahoma City, on Saturday, October 23.

His Vietnam tour ran from May 1967 to April 1968 including service near Bong Son, at Dak To, in the Battle of Tam Quan and Tet 1968 in Quang Tri Province.

Warden, born in Prague, Oklahoma, was awarded two Silver Stars, one Bronze Star, and three Purple Hearts.

Doug has been active in the 12th Regiment Association, recently serving as its President. Delta veterans know him well, as he has been a fan of our organization through the years, and has attended three of our five reunions, including our recent event in Las Vegas.

BOOK REVIEW

RUSHING THE HEDGEROWS

1st Cav faces enemy death trap

DECEMBER ISSUE OF VIETNAM MAGAZINE

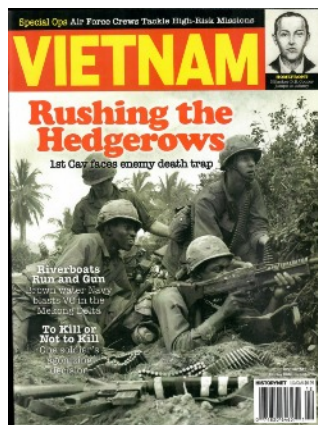
On December 17, 1966, Delta, along with the other companies of 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry, found an NVA battalion in the 506 Valley. Commanders thought they had “another Hoa Hoi,” a battle barely two months earlier in which the 1st Cavalry battalion had mostly destroyed a large enemy force at little cost to itself. They were very wrong.

Instead, they were lured into a frontal assault on the dug-in NVA unit, with catastrophic results. Delta Company alone lost 18 Killed in Action, a full 20% on a single day of the company’s KIA in the entire war, and many more wounded.

Based on a recent two-part series in *Point-to-Point* by Bob March, the cover story in the December issue of Vietnam magazine tells the story of Delta, an element of its 1st Platoon acting as a battalion-controlled recon team, and its 2nd and 3rd platoons thrown into the main battle with the other companies of the 1/12th, and measured by casualties, in the end bearing the brunt of the battle.

Very little has ever been written about the Battle of 506 Valley. Bravo company’s commander wrote about his company’s experience on the regiment’s former website; that’s disappeared from the new site. There’s less than a paragraph in the “History” link of the 1st Cavalry Division Association’s website. That’s too bad, because sometimes the most compelling stories of heroism come from those battles not counted as great victories. The 506 Valley is one of those battles.

Finally, it’s possible that the experiences of the 506 Valley, and earlier, in the operation known as “Shiny Bayonet,” changed infantry tactics for the remainder of the Vietnam War, from “find, fix, and close with infantry,” to “find, fix, and destroy with supporting firepower.” -T/WK-



WEBSITE UPDATE

Hello Brother Troopers. Around the time of our reunions visits to the website increase. We had over 7000 per month for August and September. That activity keeps the website near the top of internet searches, which in turn helps our brothers find their friends from Vietnam.

One trooper recently found the website and discovered he had been erroneously listed as “died” (a Social Security administration data error?). He has been resurrected and to prove it, attended our reunion. Hallelujah!

The reunion also resulted in a treasure trove of new photos. Those from Rosie Rosales are now posted. Photos from Cliff Sorrels should be posted soon. So too will those from Steve Kuckleman. Thanks Rosie, Steve, and Cliff. Check out the website: www.cattrack6india.com, then go to the photo index and then the lower right of that page.

You will also find the video shown at the reunion banquet, near the bottom of the photo index. And of course the reunion photos can be found at the reunion photo index.

Naturally, more photos and stories are being sought. Even if you have just a few photos, that's great. Dig them out. It really helps with our historical documentation.

Please take some time to go through the photos for your era (e.g. 67-68). Let me know if you recognize anyone whose name is not shown next to the photo, especially those that were KIA. It will help with documenting our history, as well as enhance some videos currently under construction.

Email delta@cattrack6india.com or text me at (360) 627-0918.

It was wonderful seeing all of you who attended the reunion.

THAT'S ALL FOR NOW. BRING PLENTY OF AMMO. CATTRACK6INDIA...OUT

Bob March

DELTA GOES VIRAL!

On the Delta Website there are links to Delta Company videos, hosted on YouTube, that illustrate our history and show footage of our Delta Company brothers. First introduced at our second San Antonio Reunion, sequels were produced by Bob March for Benning and Las Vegas. Supplementing those are two “Music [of the times] Videos” with Delta-in-Vietnam images Previously, our videos a steady viewership of between 100 and 140 views each month.

A recent surge of viewers, ushered in by a week of over 50,000 views, was quickly eclipsed by a steady rate of 9-10,000 a day. It seems the general public has discovered us. The largest viewership, about 55%, is from the USA. Interestingly, for the rest of the world, its Vietnam that's ***Numba One!***

As we finished editing this issue of *Butt-to-Butt*, total views have climbed over 200,000.

It is edifying to see the many positive comments left about the bravery and dedication of our Delta Brothers-in-Arms.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

By the time I returned from our reunion in Las Vegas, I was convinced it was the best military reunion that I have ever attended. The hotel services, the banquet, and our memorial service all benefited from an attention to detail in planning and execution by Delta's reunion team. At the banquet, Gary DeRigne (Speaker) and John Coleman (MC) were outstanding.

It was an absolute joy to once again spend time with the guys that I served with. That bunch got me thru Vietnam and I am forever indebted to them.

I must tell you of an emotional moment that I experienced. Jose Islas served in the 1st Platoon of Delta Company in 69-70. From Tucson, Arizona, he was given the nickname "Jo Jo" from the Beatles song "Get Back." I searched for Jose for years and finally found him two years ago. I urged Jose to attend our Reunion in Vegas, but he told me he was sick and could not make the commitment. Two weeks before the Reunion Jose passed due to complications from Agent Orange.

While working the Registration Desk, I was approached by a young man, George Islas, Jose's son. He told me that he and his Brother Alex had brought his father's remains and would like to attend the Reunion. Boys, I was speechless and immediately started to fill up with emotions.

Jose and his sons attended all the Reunion functions and Jo-Jo's sons got to meet the men their father served with and hear the stories. I feel bad that I was not able to find Jose sooner, but it shows how we need to reach out to those we have found and urge them to attend future reunions.

Good Health

Fred MaxLennan



Memorial Service Attendance well over 100



Sandy Crary, Frank Crary & Chuck Rose at the front of a Banquet full house of 140

Boot to Boot

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Mailing Permit
or
Postage

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